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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RIYADH 001710

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DEPT PLEASE PASS TO NEA/I AND NEA/ARP FOR BJACHIM/SRAMESH

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [IZ](#) [SA](#)

SUBJECT: SAUDI DELEGATION TO BAGHDAD REQUESTS LOGISTICAL
SUPPORT

REF: RIYADH 1699

Classified By: Economic Counselor Robert B. Murphy for reasons 1.4 (b)
and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: A/DCM and EmbOffs met on August 13 with Prince Mohammed bin Faisal bin Turki al-Saud, head of the delegation that will travel to Baghdad to set up the Saudi mission there. The Prince, who said the Saudis are sending this delegation to Baghdad to fulfill the King's commitment to the Secretary, requested logistical support for the mission, including travel, accommodations, security, and assistance in finding a suitable location for an embassy. He indicated that he would complete his report with his recommendations for this mission on August 14 and then present it to the King, after which a decision will be made regarding the departure date for the delegation. However, Prince Mohammed stated that he hopes the delegation -- which he anticipates to comprise five or six individuals and stay in Baghdad for approximately one week -- will be able to travel sometime next week. He stated that the Saudi mission's goal will not be to support one entity over another, rather, it is intended to "show our flag." END SUMMARY.

12. (C) A/DCM and EmbOffs met on August 13 with Prince Mohammed bin Faisal bin Turki al-Saud, (AKA Prince Mohammed bin Faisal bin Turki bin Abdul Aziz al-Saud; AKA Prince Mohammed bin Faisal al-Turki; AKA Mohammed Faisal Turki) head of the delegation that will travel to Baghdad to set up the Saudi mission there (reftel). the Prince described the purpose for this mission as "more of an inspection mission," saying he anticipates that there will be a security component -- possibly Ministry of Interior representatives -- in addition to Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) representatives. Although he suggested that the delegation would not stay in Iraq long, Prince Mohammed said he plans to meet with as many individuals as possible who can provide "relevant information." This includes Iraqis, American officials, and the Iraqi press, with which he hopes to speak directly. He also indicated that he would meet with the Iraqi Charge d'Affaires in Riyadh on August 14 to discuss the proposed mission, emphasizing that the SAG will initially require assistance to get in and out of Baghdad. The Prince plans to complete his report on August 14, after which he will present it to the King for a decision. He indicated that he wants the delegation to travel as soon as possible -- hopefully, as early as next week.

13. (C) In terms of a permanent Saudi presence in Baghdad, the

Prince thinks there will be an ambassador, two or three diplomatic staff, and administrative staff, adding that he would likely not be designated as the Saudi ambassador to Iraq. He said there will be no consular mission to speak of, although the Saudis will consider mechanisms to give high-level officials visas upon entry to the Kingdom rather than requiring them to travel to Amman first. He noted that the goal is to eventually have a fully equipped and cleared C-130 to make monthly trips into Iraq.

¶4. (C) Discussing possible locations for the Saudi mission in Baghdad, Prince Mohammed pointed out that the embassy's former location, which was in the red zone in the Mansour District, had been a leased property and the Saudis had not renewed this lease. He also noted that the SAG's policy now is to purchase property rather than lease it. However, he emphasized, security will be a "paramount consideration," saying that the Saudis will be as much a target as the Americans -- if not more. He envisions several layers of security within the compound, as well as security setbacks on the exterior of the facility. The Prince said the Saudis would consider employing foreign security companies, noting the U.S. and UK specifically, but said that they would not hire any local companies.

¶5. (C) A/DCM told Prince Mohammed that the USG will support the Saudi mission as much as possible and conveyed the contact information for those individuals in Embassy Baghdad, including the Political and Management Counselors, who have begun efforts to identify logistical requirements, as well as suitable locations for a Saudi embassy. He noted that the Embassy notified the Iraqi MFA of the upcoming Saudi mission, which in turn made available to the Saudis its guest house.

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A/DCM also told the Prince that we would provide additional information regarding the mission's logistical requirements, including travel to and from Baghdad.

¶6. (C) Prince Mohammed, who said he spent 24 years in the U.S., stated that the SAG should have supported the U.S. from the very beginning of the Iraq war, recounting how the King had directed Prince Bandar to talk to each of the then UN Security Representatives to ensure that they understood what the USG meant when it said "serious consequences" in discussions relating to UNSCR 1441. He emphasized that he has continued to push for a Saudi presence in Iraq, pointing out that the Americans will eventually leave Iraq, but the Saudis will have to live with the results of what happens there. "It is in our national security interests," he said, "to help the U.S. to succeed."

¶7. (C) "We have to be in Iraq," he continued, "and the Iraqi Government must do the right thing to represent all Iraqis." He made it clear that the Saudis do not trust the Maliki government and repeatedly noted that the Saudis are taking this step because they are "friends of the Americans." He noted that King Abdullah had specifically asked him to convey that the Saudi delegation is traveling to Iraq in response to the USG's request for SAG assistance. Prince Mohammed said that the SAG is not planning to "wait for an event" to establish its mission there, rather, will be there to "show our flag." However, the Prince stated that this initial mission would not get involved in political issues and is instead going to "get the lay of the land."

¶8. (C) The Prince asked several times during the meeting for input regarding what the USG wants the Saudis to accomplish "vis-a-vis your efforts in Iraq." He suggested that there would be no further use of the term "illegal occupation," noting that the Saudis would not establish a mission in an occupied country. He noted the difficulties the SAG would have in trusting the Iraqi Government because of the sectarianism. "We are not going there to support this or that entity," he said, "we do not want to interfere." He insisted that such interference would only backfire, but

added that "We also don't want to finance those who agree with the U.S." He continued that the Saudis' mission is to further the "correct representation of Islam," and that the Islamic way is to talk to everyone.

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19. (C) HRH Prince Mohammed bin Faisal bin Turki al-Saud; AKA Prince Mohammed bin Faisal bin Turki bin Abul Aziz al-Saud; AKA Prince Mohammed bin Faisal al-Turki; AKA Mohammed Faisal Turki) has been the Director of the EU division of the Saudi MFA for approximately two years. He has the reputation for being extremely engaged on EU issues and with the various EU representatives in Riyadh. He is the great grandson of King Abdul Aziz and his grandfather was Turki bin Abdul Aziz, the eldest son of King Abdul Aziz and a full brother of King Saud. His father, Prince Faisal bin Turki, was Minister of Interior for seven months under King Saud. He was removed by King Faisal and drank himself to death. Prince Mohammed spent 24 years in the U.S., and has close relations with former Saudi Ambassador to the U.S. Prince Bandar bin Sultan. He is divorced with one daughter and two sons, all are attending American educational institutions.
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